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U. S. AID FOR NEAR EAST

Now that the Atlantic pact is all but signed, sealed and delivered, Washington is turning its attention toward the Middle East, with the idea of implementing President Truman's inaugural suggestion that the United States sponsor aid to undeveloped states. The president's offer was further clarified in the United Nations later when Willard L. Thorp, American delegate to the U.N. Economic and Social Council, told that body that the U.S. was prepared to offer technical experts to states lacking in industrial development.

There have been recurring rumors both in this country and in the Middle East about a regional pact with the countries in the latter area, a sort of Truman or Marshall plan, devised to ward off the further penetration of Communism into the fabulously oil-rich Arab lands. Comments in leading Arabic journals in the Middle East look upon the U.S. moves both favorably and unfavorably: as an opportunity for their people to benefit from Western technology and skill or as an example of further encroachment of Western imperialism in the disguise of benevolence.

Some skepticism over the U.S. plan was expressed by Dr. Charles Malik, Lebanese delegate, who, while praising the general objectives of the Truman global plan, raised ten pertinent questions. Dr. Malik said that the countries in his area had already had many foreign commissions and experts examine the needs of the Arab world and had made sound suggestions for their implementation, but that these recommendations have yet to be carried out.

Dr. Malik asked whether the giving of technical assistance before providing capital goods to utilize the advice of experts might not be wasteful and frustrating. He recalled cases in the past when foreign engineers were sent to undeveloped

areas only to waste their time because they had no materials or equipment to put into operation their recommendations.

Any student of the Middle East knows to what extent the Western nations have exploited that area for themselves while the natives remained depressed and in poverty. While Dr. Malik did not mention imperialism, he nevertheless implied the question as to what guarantee there was that such profit for foreign capital would not be excessive to the point of exploitation.

The reaction of Arab public opinion to the implied American offer of aid varied but it always ended in cynicism because of the support given by Washington to Zionist aggression. One Egyptian commentator claimed that U.S. diplomats abroad express "as bitter criticism of the White House policy regarding Palestine as the embittered Arabs." The Arabs are aware of the fertile ground of poverty, deprivation and antiquated economic system for the spread of Communism. Arab leftists, supported by many moderate socialistically minded intelligentsia, look upon the proposed financial and technical help as an attempt to strengthen the decadent bureaucracies now ruling the Arab states.

Reports from Cairo indicate that there is a definite trend among Egyptian officials to utilize the American offer in order to strengthen commercial relations between the two countries. Meanwhile London and Washington are stepping up their campaign to sell the Arabs the idea of a new Marshall plan for the Middle East.

ZIONIST SCHOOLS ADOPT RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

Whereas English and Arabic were recognized as secondary languages in the Jewish schools in Palestine for the past 30 years, the Jewish Board of Education has decided to place the Russian language on the secondary footing. This information appeared in the Hebrew newspaper, HADACHOT of Tel Aviv, according to Al Misri, a reputable daily newspaper in Cairo on Feb. 3, 1949. The same source asserts that preparations are well under way to use Russian in the elementary and secondary schools.

(This development is extremely significant from the point of view that about 600,000 of the 800,000 Jews now in Palestine come from the Slavic areas of Eastern Europe, dominated by Soviet Russia.)

OIL PORTENDS IN MIDDLE EAST

That a new trend is developing in the granting of oil concessions by the Arab states is clearly indicated in a most interesting article by B. Orchard Lisle in this month's issue of The Oil Forum (480 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.) The article reveals that the Government of Syria has granted petroleum development rights over approximately 22,100 square miles in the Syrian Republic to an organization headed by James W. MenHall of Benton, Ill.

Mr. Lisle, who personally observed the final stages of the negotiations, makes some keen observations about the proposed \$100,000,000 development. Headed by Mr. MenHall, independent oil companies in the United States are expected to furnish \$50,000,000 capital, with a similar amount to be put up by the Syrian government. What is most interesting about this agreement is that it eliminates immediate receipts of large cash bonuses which have previously marked concessions obtained by British, French, Dutch and American companies for oil rights when all Arabs were then at the mercy of mandated authorities.

"Mr. MenHall is himself an Arab, born on the Syrian-Lebanese border," Mr. Orchard reports. "He was invited to Syria for discussions of petroleum development problems because of the confidence inspired by his blood kinship to the people of the Levant - the only Arab who is a practical oil man engaged in independent operations in the most competitive country in the world"

"Mr. MenHall was not without stiff competition for Syrian oil rights. Representatives of Superior Oil Co. of California and American Independent Oil Co. were there before him. Even during his concluding negotiations, a British group made an offer of \$2,500,000 and the government inferred that they were prepared to double this figure. Other claimants included some Italians and an engineer from Spain . . ."

Mr. Orchard asserts that because of Mr. MenHall's Arabic background, the Illinois man was invited by President Shukri Bey Quwatli to explore the possibilities of oil in Syria. Finally, interested cabinet ministers supported the Syrian president in approving a convention covering approximately

one-half the total area of Syria. President Quwatli has insisted that "no matter what other Syrians or Americans might be associated in the joint enterprise, Mr. MenHall should be the firm's managing director," reports Mr. Orchard.

The thing that is most interesting in this new oil development in the Middle East is Mr. MenHall's "desire to deal with the Syrian Government on a standard U.S. lease basis, with an operating company formed under the laws of Syria and with local investors accepted as corporate partners on an equal basis."

A report from Chicago on March 11 quotes Mr. MenHall as describing the \$100,000,000 project as a "fifty-fifty deal." He said that the \$50,000,000 which the Syrian government would put up would be spent in the U.S. for machine tools, tractors, plows and hydro-electric power equipment.

"Americans will run the project," Mr. MenHall explained. "We plan to send geologists, technicians, machinery and drilling rigs to Syria within the next 60 days. We also expect to set up a refinery at Lakara, near Tripoli which will service the American fleet with oil in the Mediterranean."

While this Syrian development was taking place, from Karachi, Pakistan, came reports that a private Moslem business group is seeking to take over British and United States oil interests in the Middle East. Toward that end an international Islamic economic conference is scheduled to take place in June in Karachi with the main object, "to liquidate all British and American interests in the oil of the Middle East and to bring them under Moslem influence."

SOVIET UNDERMINING ZIONISM?

"The Soviet Union and its satellites, having agreed in the Security Council to the setting up of a Jewish national state, now work to undermine and subvert it." Such is the analysis, based on documented fact, made by Dorothy Thompson, nationally known American columnist, to her syndicated newspapers on March 15, 1949.

Miss Thompson pointed out that whenever there has been a divergence of policy between the United States and Great Britain over the so-called Jewish state, "American Communists have carried the Israel banner and joined the Zionist

SEEK FREEDOM FOR MOSLEMS IN RUSSIA

While the World's attention was riveted upon the trial and conviction of Cardinal Mindszenty in Communist-controlled Hungary and the accusations against 15 Protestant church leaders in Bulgaria, a movement which has drawn no public attention was started in Cairo to liberate some 30,000,000 Moslems from Russian rule. The Brotherhood of Islamic Reform Party (al-Ikhaa wa al-Islah al-Islami) has formed a special committee to undertake a Pan-Islamic conference with that aim as their goal.

Several Islamic countries have given the special committee encouraging support in the movement which is expected to form governments-in-exile in the Egyptian capital for the two Moslem states of Turkistan and Gulkas, both of which are labelled as "under the yoke of godless Communism." The conference is expected also to discuss practical measures to foster a strong Pan-Islamic policy to combat the Communist threat to Afghanistan. Iran and Turkey.

The proposed conference is not confined to politics. It plans to consider reforms in the practical application of Mohammedan teachings, especially in economic and social fields of contemporary life. Under the title, "Islamic Socialism", the conferees will discuss how Mohammedanism can meet the new concepts of modern living.

propaganda against Great Britain, knowing that the Zionist cause is much more popular and dynamic than communism among American Jews."

"But the real attitude of the Soviets toward Zionism and Israel," Miss Thompson charges, "is expressed in measures taken within the Soviet Union and by the Communist governments of the satellite states. Communists, in short, are pro-Zionist in America as long as they can seize a stick to belabor the British. But in the territory they control, they proscribe Zionism on the one hand, and on the other, try to infiltrate Communist emigrants into Palestine."

Documenting her charges, Miss Thompson cites that in Rumania, "all Zionist clubs and schools have been liquidated on the ground that they support 'independent, national attributes of Jewry.'" Miss Thompson then quotes a broadcast by the Rumanian Politburo: "Zionism of any color is a political, nationalist, reactionary movement of the Jewish bourgeois which tries to isolate Jewish working people from others and hinder them in the struggle against capitalism within the ranks of the anti-imperialist camp."

NEWS FROM THE ARAB CAPITALS

While the American press has been treating the signing of an agreement by the Egyptians and Zionists as a "peace treaty," the plain matter of fact is that the negotiations involved purely military matters. This fact is stressed in an official statement issued by Mustafa Mirai Bey, Minister of State for Egypt, relative to the truce pact signed with the Zionists at Rhodes on February 24, 1949. Said Mirai Bey:

"This agreement is concerned solely with the military situation. Any other phase and aspect in the Palestine situation is outside the scope of this agreement and shall not be affected by its terms. This point is clearly emphasized in Article 4 of the Rhodes agreement which reads:

"...the following principles and purposes are affirmed:
(1) The principle that no military or political advantage should be gained under the truce ordered by the Security Council is recognized."

"It is further recognized that rights, claims or interests of a non-military character in the area of Palestine covered by this agreement may be asserted by either party and that these, by mutual agreement being excluded from the armistice negotiations, shall be, at the discretion of the parties, a subject of later settlement."

Mirai Bey points to Article II which states that "No provision of this agreement shall in any way prejudice the rights, claims and positions of either party hereto to the ultimate settlement of the Palestine question."

The Egyptian minister cited that Egypt still has the right to uphold and act in any manner that she deems fit toward the Palestine (Arab) case, and that Egypt retained full rights as to such future action and policy.

ZIONISTS GIVE SOVIETS HOLY SHRINES IN PALESTINE

Properties of the Greek Orthodox Church in areas occupied by the Jews in Palestine have been handed over to Soviet Russia by Zionist authorities in Tel-Aviv, according to Al-Misri of Jan. 10, 1949. The news report gives details of places, shrines, convents, schools and other public institutions, and other immovable property which belong to the White Russian

Greek Orthodox Church. Such property had been kept from Soviet Russia for the past 30 years, despite continuous demands by Moscow. White Russian monks had been operating these institutions for the benefit of their community adherents. Now their control has been transferred to the Soviet Legation in Tel-Aviv.

On the same day Al Misri quotes a report from London that Whitehall spokesmen believed that the Greek Orthodox property was traded by the Zionists for obvious political reasons. Moscow is said to have accepted the terms of ownership as part of the price for the arms traffic which Zionist agents are moving through Communist dominated countries in Europe to Palestine. Russian military supplies are known to be in abundant quantities in Zionist hands in the Holy Land.

LIBYANS IN DEMONSTRATION

Indignant demonstrations followed the action of the British administration in Cyrenaica, Libya, in dissolving the Senussian army which had been formed during the recent war to provide active resistance against the Axis forces in the North African desert. The demonstrators carried placards and banners and, parading through the streets in several towns, demanded the retention of the native armed force that it may serve as a security force when the independence of the country is established. The British administration has also been accused of allowing an alarming increase in Italian immigrants into Libya with the apparent intention of supporting Italian claims to that area. The British are also blamed for granting exclusive economic concessions to foreign firms with no protective measures to safeguard the interests and rights of the native population.

From Libyan Tripoli comes a report that intensive preparations are being made by representative bodies of the Libyan Liberation movement to make a strong challenge to any attempt by the Western powers to return Italian rule to that part of North Africa. Sayyed Bashir As-Sadawi, chairman of the Liberation Front and Tripolitanian leader, was scheduled to tour his country relative to an emergency setup of Libyan national groups before proceeding to Lake Success to defend the Arab case for an undivided and independent Libya. The

special session of the U.N. General Assembly in April has on its agenda the disposition of Libya and other Italian colonies.

YEMEN CHARTERS MODERNIZATION COURSE

Yemen, the most medieval kingdom in the world, is embarking on a modernization program. That announcement was made in Cairo by Judge Abdulla al-Imari, the nation's foreign minister and its representative in the Arab League.

Under Imam Yahya, aged and reactionary ruler who was assassinated about a year ago, contact with the West was generally shunned. The ancient kingdom really stepped out of its mountain cloisteredness when it was admitted into the United Nations in 1947. Since then progress has been rather accelerated for this Islamic kingdom in a remote corner of the Arab world. The present government has begun the construction of new roads and has erected power plants on a small scale. It is enlarging and equipping the port of Hodeida so that it can serve the growing needs of the country.

Judge al-Imari said that in both the import and export fields, Yemen hopes to create a favorable balance of trade. As a first step toward modernization, Yemen is importing machinery tools and technical skill for agricultural development.

Arab industrial and commercial companies are already at work. A new Arab firm was granted a concession to conduct mining and industrial developments. Meanwhile a medical commission of Arab and French physicians has been studying the health conditions of the country for several months.

PREDICTS CIVIL WAR IN NORTH AFRICA

If the French and Spanish persist in maintaining their present colonial policies and in opposing the full independence of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, civil war is bound to break out in North Africa. That was the prediction made by Ahmed Hizana, an Algerian representative in the French National Assembly, in London last month. Interviewed at the Conference of Anti-Imperialist Nations, Mr. Hizana said that Algerians are in full support of Libyan national aspirations.

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